



Why Study World Religions?

“No person in the modern world can be considered educated without a basic knowledge of all the great religions of the world—Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity”

— **Author, professor, and education theorist E. D. Hirsch**

“Today it is simply irresponsible to use the word ‘educated’ to describe college graduates who are ignorant of the ancient creeds, stories, and rituals that continue to motivate the beliefs and behaviors of the overwhelming majority of the world's population. In a world as robustly religious as ours, it is foolish to imagine that such graduates are equipped to participate fully in the politics of the nation or the affairs of the world.”

— **Author and Boston University religion professor Stephen Prothero**

“In fact, if I went back to college today, I think I would probably major in comparative religion, because that’s how integrated it is in everything that we are working on and deciding and thinking about in life today.”

— **U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry**

"Comparative religion is the true multiculturalism and should be installed as the core curriculum in every undergraduate program... I contend that every educated person should be conversant with the sacred texts, rituals, and symbol systems of the great world religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Judeo-Christianity, and Islam — and that true global understanding is impossible without such knowledge."

- **Author and Professor Camille Paglia**

From Prof. Welch’s students in REL2300:

“This professor is perhaps the best I've had in my college career. He really wants to make sure you're learning and actively interacting with material. He puts more emphasis on learning, instead of simply giving us a list for memorization.”

“Thank you for this great semester. I learned a lot of new things from this class. It has been a pleasure being in your class, and having you as my professor. Great teaching style!!!”

“I enjoyed every minute of this class it was worth it. Being a part of this class... I just wanted to encourage you to keep up the good work teaching. Thanks“

“It's been a blast this semester. Thank you for being awesome!”

“The professor is very knowledgeable in the matter and makes the learning experience interesting and easy to understand. He makes the students feel safe to express their ideas and respect others point of view.”

“I enjoyed the class, the teacher is amazing”

“Class setting was very easy-going and I always felt comfortable having (or listening to) the discussions we had within the lecture”

“...this is one course everybody should take because it will make people more tolerant of each other.”

“This class with this teacher was very interesting; He definitely knows how to catch students' attention.”

“I would absolutely recommend this class. Professor Welch made some of the most hard to comprehend religions, understandable.”



“Absolutely!!! He is very knowledgeable, friendly and respectful others point of view and ideas”




“The professor creates a learning environment which I have never experienced before”




“With a Hot-Button topic like religion, it's difficult to find an unbiased introduction to religions that are commonly mentioned, but never explained. Professor Welch made these introductions more than palatable. He gave clear and concise origins to the religions being taught without attaching any kind of personal stigmas; this made learning a brand new topic much more enjoyable for me.”



VALENCIA COLLEGE




REL 2300 Course Syllabus Spring Semester 2019

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| Disclaimer | <i>Changes may be made at the discretion of the instructor.</i> |
| CONTACT INFORMATION  | Professor Tom Welch West Campus Phone: 407-538-9379 Email: twelch9@valenciacollege.edu Office Hours: Flexible - contact me! http://frontdoor.valenciacollege.edu/faculty.cfm?uid=twelch9 |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION  | <p>Basic introduction to the world's religions. Explores practices and beliefs of major religious traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. Through a comparative approach, students are able to identify factors that unite us across cultures as they consider the role of religion in the human condition. Accordingly, students of religion will develop greater sensitivity to diversity, an invaluable skill in today's multicultural society and the global economy.</p> <p>Gordon Rule course which requires demonstration of college level writing skills through multiple assignments. Prerequisite: <u>ENC 1101</u> or <u>ENC 1101H</u> or <u>IDH 1110</u> Minimum grade of C required if used to satisfy Gordon Rule requirement.</p> |
| GORDON RULE | State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.030, the Gordon Rule , requires that students complete with grades of C or better 12 credits in designated courses in which the student is required to demonstrate college-level writing skills through multiple assignments and six credits of mathematics course work at the level of college algebra or higher. These courses must be completed successfully (grades of C or better) prior to the receipt of an A.A. degree and prior to entry into the upper division of a Florida public university. Students who have not earned an Associate in Arts degree must complete the Gordon Rule requirement prior to being admitted to a Bachelor degree program. |
| PREREQUISITE | ENC 1101 (for any writing course) |
| CREDIT HOURS | 3 Credit Hours |
| REQUIRED TEXT  | Brodd, Jeffrey, et al, Invitation to World's Religions , 2nd Edition, Oxford ISBN: 978-0-19-973843-4 This book is absolutely necessary for this course. It is available from the bookstore new, used or rental or, at reduced prices from Oxford, Amazon, eBook from CourseSmart and rental from chegg.com , eCampus.com. |

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| INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS | Additional Instructional material and Primary Source material will be available for the student online and free of cost. | |
| COURSE FORMAT & METHOD OF INSTRUCTION | The course will be taught through a combination of lecture, hands-on classroom exercises and homework assignments. Students should not assume that there will be class time to complete homework assignments. Required readings, assignments and other activities will be provided. | |
| MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  | <p>By the completion of the course the student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connect the study of religion to their everyday experience. ● Explain important concepts in religion such as myth, ritual, and sacred space. ● Understand the relationships between specific religious traditions and their cultural and historical contexts. ● Compare and contrast divisions within religious traditions. (e.g., Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, Protestant and Catholic Christianity) ● Understand the moral and ethical precepts of the various religious traditions. ● Demonstrate college level writing. | |
| VALENCIA GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME | <p>CULTURAL & HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING: Demonstrate understanding of the diverse traditions of the world, and an individual's place in it.</p> <p>ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY: Demonstrate awareness of personal responsibility in one's civic, social, and academic life.</p> <p>CRITICAL THINKING: Effectively analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and apply information and ideas from diverse sources and disciplines</p> | |
| ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES | | |
| GRADING SCALE | Grades are based on points earned and accumulated. The following grading scale is used: A=900-1000; B=800-899; C=700-799; D=600-699; F=below 600 | |
| COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING  | Grades will be calculated based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class Participation 200 ● Participation in Online Activities 100 ● Quizzes - due before class (10): 200 ● Two 500-1000 word Papers: (75 Points each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Field Report 75 ○ Paper: Religion and Film 75 ● One 1000-2000 word Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compare and Contrast Paper 150 ● Midterm 100 ● <u>Final</u> 100 ● Total: 1000 <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Extra Credit: Syllabus Quiz, SFI Course Eval, Two Learning Center visits</i> <i>100 Possible Points</i> | |
| IMPORTANT DATES  | <p>First Day of Class - January 8</p> <p>Drop/Refund Deadline - January 15</p> <p>No show period for Full Term - January 15-24</p> <p>Learning Day - February 15</p> <p>Spring Break - March 11-17</p> <p>Withdrawal Deadline for Full term - March 22</p> <p>Student Feedback on Instruction - March 20 - April 17</p> <p>Last day of classes - April 16</p> <p>Final Exam Week - April 22-26</p> | |

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| | <p>Grades Due - April 29 before 9:00am</p> <p><i>January 25, 2019 - Deadline to Apply for Graduation.</i></p> |
| <p>CLASS PARTICIPATION</p>  | <p>Participation in class involves a number of variables, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your willingness to participate actively in all class activities. • Your cooperation during group and pair work. • Your respect and attitude toward the class and your peers. • Your daily preparation for each class. • Your instructor may assign written homework that will be collected and graded; these assignments form part of your participation grade <p>Participation does not mean interrupting the class, leaving the room and coming back, and/or just asking questions.</p> |
| <p>Paper (500-1000 Word) (I am indebted to Prof. Vishma Kunu for this excellent idea!)</p> | <p>Religion in Film: I will provide a list of movies in Canvas that deal with religion in some capacity. Choose one from the list to view and write about, or submit your own choice. Essay Prompt: Describe three ways in which this film expands and/or challenges your understanding of the religious tradition/s depicted in the film. Use specific examples from the film and/or course material to support your answer.</p> |
| <p>Paper (500-1000 Word) (Shamelessly stolen from Prof. Julie Montione!)</p> | <p>Field Report: Students will write a short paper analyzing their experience at a local religious institution - comparing and contrasting the service with information presented through class as well as their own religious experience. Please read all the announcements and handouts on Canvas before completing your report. You will need to include a “selfie” documenting your attendance at the event.</p> |
| <p>Paper (1000-2000 Word) (Shamelessly stolen from Prof. Julie Montione!)</p> | <p>Both Buddhism and Christianity emerged from existing religious systems that continued after their development. In a well-developed essay using ample primary sources (meaning texts from the religious traditions; Bible, Bhagavad Gita, Tripitaka), discuss which religion (Buddhism or Christianity) was more of a departure from its “parent religion”. You must address all four religions in your paper in order to effectively argue your position. Your thesis is your ANSWER to this question. You need this answer (thesis) in your introduction!</p> |
| <p>VALENCIA COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</p> | |
| <p>ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS</p>  | <p>Cellular phones cannot be on your desk at any time. Text messaging or answering your cell phone while in-class will be considered disruptive behavior and can be a cause for your dismissal from class. NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND NO TEXT MESSAGING. At no time will you be allowed to listen to your IPOD or MP3 player in class. You are not allowed to have any music device on your desk. Also, notebooks (computers) are not to be used during class. It is distracting to other students</p> |
| <p>CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR</p>  | <p>Phone messages should consist of your name, your class and class time, and a brief message. Questions such as “What did we cover in class?” will not result in a response. Due to the problem of “phone tag”, student phone calls will normally not be returned. Emails with specific questions will be answered as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours (during weekdays). Students who need more than a brief response should arrange a meeting with the instructor.</p> <p>Students who are absent are fully responsible for all material covered in class. Leaving a message on my phone or sending an e-mail will not be an excused absence. Make sure you can contact your classmates too.</p> |

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| <p>ATTENDANCE POLICY & NO SHOW PROCEDURES</p> | <p>If you must miss a class or activity or are late it will impact your grade. Classroom and activity attendance and punctuality is vital to academic success. Excused absences will be allowed in accordance with Valencia's official policies.</p> <p>You must attend class all semester, be on time and submit the assignments on the due dates to meet the attendance requirement.</p> <p>Your attendance is essential. If you must miss a class please get prior approval. If you miss due to an emergency please provide documentation</p> | | | | |
| <p>MAKE-UP POLICY</p> | <p>Exams and Final Exam cannot be made up. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.</p> <p>I will deal with personal issues on a case to case basis. Please provide documentation for all life changing events. I will work with you if you have conflicts.</p> | | | | |
| <p>WITHDRAWAL POLICY</p>  | <p>Per Valencia Policy 4-07 (Academic Progress, Course Attendance and Grades, and Withdrawals), a student who withdraws from class before the established deadline for a particular term will receive a grade of "W".</p> <p>A student may withdraw at any time during the term in Atlas. The New Withdrawal Policy has been implemented. Here's what you need to know about the new Withdrawal Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may withdraw themselves for a W up until the withdrawal deadline. • After the withdrawal deadline each semester, students can no longer withdraw themselves. • WP and WF have been deleted from Withdrawal procedures. • Before the withdrawal deadline, both a student and faculty may withdraw the student. • After the withdrawal deadline, a student cannot withdraw him-/herself. <p>Excessive absences/ Lateness of fifteen minutes or early departure will count as a miss hour. A professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission. (2002-03 College Catalog p.62) Do not leave early without informing me. This is disruptive and rude.</p> <p><u>If a student knowing he/she is not passing the course but fails to withdraw before the deadline date but decides to stop coming to class should know the professor will not withdraw him/her from the course and the grade of F will be assigned.</u></p> | | | | |
| <p>BEHAVIOR POLICY</p>  | <p>Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting or is clearly disrespectful of the instructor or fellow students will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include but is not limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rude or disrespectful behavior; • Unwarranted interruptions; • Failure to adhere to instructor's directions; • Vulgar or obscene language, slurs, or other forms of intimidation; • Physically or verbally abusive behavior. <p>Student's behavior that is inappropriate will result in disenrollment from the course.</p> | | | | |
| <p>CODE OF CONDUCT</p> | <p>VCC Expected student conduct: 10-03 Student Code of Conduct</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="532 1625 972 1724"> <tr> <td>Specific Authority:</td> <td>1006.60, FS.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Law Implemented:</td> <td>1006.60, FS.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Valencia College is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and learning, and to the development of responsible personal and social conduct. By enrolling at Valencia, a student assumes the responsibility for knowing and abiding by the rules of appropriate behavior as articulated in the Student Code of Conduct. The primary responsibility for managing the</p> | Specific Authority: | 1006.60, FS. | Law Implemented: | 1006.60, FS. |
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| Law Implemented: | 1006.60, FS. | | | | |

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|  | <p>classroom environment rests with the faculty. Faculty may direct students who engage in inappropriate behavior that results in disruption of a class to leave the class. Such students may be subject to other disciplinary action which may include a warning, withdrawal from class, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the college. Please read the Student Code of Conduct in the current Valencia Student Handbook.</p> <p>Here is the link to Valencia's Student Code of Conduct website: http://www.valenciacollege.edu/policies/policydetail2.cfm?PolicyCatID=10&PolicyID=3</p> |
| <p>ACADEMIC HONESTY</p> | <p>Each student is required to follow Valencia policy regarding academic honesty. All work submitted by students is expected to be the result of the student's individual thoughts, research, and self-expression unless the assignment specifically states "group project." Any act of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with Valencia policy as set forth in the Student Handbook and Catalog.</p> <p>Students may collaborate in group assignments. Collaboration should be used to edit or to clarify doubts. If anyone is involved in incidents of cheating a zero will be given. Each student is expected to be in complete compliance with the college policy on <i>Academic Honesty</i> as set forth in the admissions catalog and the student handbook. Any student(s) cheating on an exam will receive a zero on the exam. This cannot be replaced with the final score and the professor at his/her discretion can withdraw you from the class.</p> |
| <p>PLAGIARISM</p> | <p>Please see the following document on what plagiarism is: http://valenciacollege.edu/oit/learning-technology-services/student-resources/academic-integrity/plagiarism.cfm</p> <p>Exams and homework are considered individual effort; any submissions that are too similar for coincidence will receive no credit.</p> |
| <p>INTERNET RESEARCH</p>  | <p>The use of the computers is exclusively for activities relevant to the class. Activities not in accordance with the Valencia Student Code of Conduct will be considered a violation. Because of the variety of sources, ease of publication, lack of central control and proliferation of commercial information on the free Internet, it is often hard to tell if the information is reliable. Many sites contain research and information of high quality. However, unlike traditional print publications or library-based electronic resources, there is usually no process of peer review, nor is there an editor verifying the accuracy of information presented on the Internet.</p> <p>There are an increasing number of sites containing information that may be incomplete, anonymously written, out-of-date, biased, fraudulent, or whose content may not be factual. Students should, therefore, use caution in use of the Internet for their research needs when working on activities.</p> <p>For academic topics that are addressed in scholarly literature, uses of electronic databases or visiting the library may better meet your needs. However, each professor makes the final determination of what is or is not accepted as a valid source so review the syllabus for specific guidelines from your professor</p> |
| <p>VALENCIA COLLEGE RESOURCES</p> | |
| <p>IMPORTANT VALENCIA LINKS</p>  | <p>College Calendar: http://valenciacollege.edu/calendar/ College Catalog: http://valenciacollege.edu/catalog/ Valencia Policy and Procedures: http://valenciacollege.edu/generalcounsel/policy/ FERPA: http://valenciacollege.edu/ferpa/ ADA: http://valenciacollege.edu/osd/handbook/sec4.htm Medical Records: http://valenciacollege.edu/generalcounsel/policy/ValenciaCollegePolicy.cfm?policyID=186</p> |

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| BAYCARE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH'S STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM | Valencia is committed to making sure all our students have a rewarding and successful college experience. To that purpose, Valencia students can get immediate help that may assist them with psychological issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Students have 24 hour unlimited access to the Baycare Behavioral Health's confidential student assistance program phone counseling services by calling (800) 878-5470. Three free confidential face-to- face counseling sessions are also available to students. |
| DISCLAIMER | <i>This document may be altered at the instructor's discretion, during the course of the term. It is the responsibility of the student to make any adjustments as announced. Your continued participation in this course after the drop-add deadline period constitutes an agreement with and an acceptance of the conditions presented in this syllabus.</i> |